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CSD *News Release*

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IMAGE BUILDING AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY; THEME OF "CHAUFFEUR OF THIRD QUARTER" AWARD

The role of taxicab drivers in rebuilding Miami-Dade County's tourism industry was the theme of an award ceremony held at the County Commission's Chambers this morning at which the Board of County Commissioners honored eight taxicab drivers, and named one of them its Chauffeur of the Quarter for July – September.

"People like these drivers give our community a great name," said District 3 Commissioner, Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler, sponsor of the Taxicab Chauffeur Incentive Program (TCIP), adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1998.

These exemplary taxicab drivers contribute to our economic recovery and to the betterment of our community, added Sheila Rushton, Director of the Consumer Services Department (CSD), which coordinates the TCIP.

And the winner of the Chauffeur of the Quarter Award, Gerald Raphael, said, "We drivers have to be professional and put the best into what we are doing for our visitors."

Mr. Raphael, who migrated to the United States from Haiti in 1985, has been a driver with Super Yellow Cab since 1997.

His award resulted from a letter of commendation from Dr. and Mrs. L.A. Wurtenberger of Stuttgart, Germany. Dr. Wurtenberger's letter to CSD told how last August his wife and he had arrived exhausted at Miami International Airport and had taken Mr. Raphael's cab to Hallandale. When they disembarked his wife left her handbag containing travelers checks, a mobile phone, her passport, and other valuable items in the cab.

He told of Mr. Raphael's repeated and ultimately successful efforts to find them and return their valuables.

"We would like to thank Mr. Raphael and wish your company more drivers with such a sense of honesty," Dr. Wurtenberger wrote.

Commissioner Carey-Shuler presented Mr. Raphael with a \$500 cash award and a plaque. He will also receive a one-night stay courtesy of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

The seven other drivers nominated for the 'Chauffeur of the Third Quarter' award each received a certificate and a \$50 cash award. They were Stephane Cadet, Michael Candio, Joseph Desir, Lebrun Leclair, Yslet Lubin, and Najib Segebre.

The TCIP is a Consumer Services Department program, which recognizes taxicab drivers for outstanding service to tourists, visitors and residents of Miami-Dade County.

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The Miami Dade Consumer Services Department is an agency of Miami-Dade County government that protects consumers through complaint mediation, business regulation, and consumer education. The Department operates the Consumer Hotline (305) 375-3677, a central telephone number for consumer complaints and information.